

# MEDREGION UPDATE

Regional Office Tunis

## MEPI Annual Regional Training Conference

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**MEPI Medregion Update Newsletter is produced by the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) Regional Office at the U.S. Embassy in Tunis, Tunisia.**

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The Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) held its annual regional training conference in Istanbul, Turkey, November 24-28. The conference brought together MEPI coordinators, administrators, and project officers from all over the Near East region, along with several MEPI staff from Washington.

At the opening of the conference, MEPI Director Karen Volker introduced the new MEPI mission statement: "*MEPI's mission is to create vibrant partnerships between America and the citizens of the Middle East and North Africa to empower them to build more pluralistic, participatory, and prosperous societies throughout the region.*" (To learn more about MEPI's mission please visit: [www.mepi.state.gov](http://www.mepi.state.gov) or click on the links above).

During the week-long conference Karen and the group were joined by NEA Deputy Assistant Secretary Tamara Wittes and Ambassador Michele Sison, who told the group how powerful a tool she found MEPI to be during her time as Chief of Mission in Lebanon. On the final day of the conference the Microsoft representative responsible for corporate citizenship in the Middle East region spoke to the group, and presented a Microsoft pledge to



Participants during the training conference

provide free software to any local nongovernmental organizations and civil society organizations partnering with MEPI.

Participants in the conference learned about and discussed a wide variety of topics during the week, including techniques for reaching out to civil society, designing and monitoring grant

projects, and turning project results into public diplomacy products and materials. According to comments and ratings received after each day, participants were informed and energized by the conference and left Istanbul better prepared to carry out MEPI programs in pursuit of their mission goals. ■



Khalil Derbel

## We Welcome a New Member to RO Tunis

MEPI Regional Office in Tunis is very pleased to welcome our new colleague Khalil Derbel. Our new Program Assistant, Khalil joins MEPI from the Arabic Field School (FSI), where he was Language Instructor for fifteen years. Khalil has a Masters degree in English Literature, from the Faculty of Letters, Arts and Humanities in Tunisia.

Khalil Joins Wahid Labidi and Khaled Abou El Naga in the MEPI Program Unit. ■

## New Funding Opportunities

### Support for Egyptian Civil Society Reform Initiatives

The Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) of the U.S. Department of State is pleased to announce, pending availability of funds, support for civil society development initiatives in Egypt.

**Purpose of Grant:** Through this grant opportunity, MEPI intends to support Egyptian civil society, including civil companies (law firms, consulting firms, trade associations, media companies), women's groups, and professional associations that are committed to building democracy and undertaking reform. Funding is available for projects that increase political openness and democratic processes, create new economic opportunities, enhance access to and quality of education systems, and/or empower women. For more information on how to apply please visit : [www.medregion.mepi.state.gov](http://www.medregion.mepi.state.gov)

### New Projects to Support Civil Society Organizations and Social Innovators

- New Funding Opportunity for Strengthening the Rule of Law (Closing November 19, 2010)
- New Funding Opportunity for Supporting Civic Activism (Closing November 22, 2010)
- New Funding Opportunity for Political Process Strengthening (Closing November 17, 2010)

For more details please visit MEPI Medregion website at: [www.medregion.mepi.state.gov](http://www.medregion.mepi.state.gov)

## Submit Your Grant Applications Now!

Funding is available now for Local Grants. Please contact your country's U.S. Embassy MEPI Committee and see the guidebook available on our [website](http://www.medregion.mepi.state.gov) for step-by-step instructions in English and Arabic.

[www.medregion.mepi.state.gov](http://www.medregion.mepi.state.gov)



### Program Income

*By MEPI Grants Unit*

During the life time of the project, the grantee may earn income as a result of the award or the different activities such as participants' fees, registration fees, selling of items or ads in the grantee's website.

Program income can be integrated into the award process in four different ways:

The first and most common method we use when the Grantee earns program income during the project period is to add the income to meet the Grantee's cost sharing or matching requirements. This does not change the Government's obligation amount to the project and is usually the easiest and most convenient method.

The second method that the Grants Officer may choose when considering Program Income is to add the income to the total amount of the award and use it to further eligible project objectives. This method most likely requires an amendment once the final income amount is determined.

The Grants Officer may also choose to deduct the program income from the total allowable costs to determine the net allowable costs on which the U.S. Government share will be based. This method reduces the Government's obligation amount to the project and may result in money being returned to the U.S. Government, depending on how much income is earned and when it is earned.

When program income is earned during a project, the Grants Officer may also choose a combination of two or more of the above listed options. For example, Program Income may be used to cover both the Grantee's Cost-Share and the U.S. Government's share equally or proportionally. There may also be limitations placed on the types of costs to which the program income may be applied in some cases.

There are a lot of flexibilities in this matter. The decided method will be stated within the Program Specifics in Paragraph 3. While the final option is up to the discretion of the Grants Officer, we recommend discussing these options with MEPI and informing us as to your preference, as each organization and project varies, and we want to consider all of these variables when making a decision. ■



## MEPI Building Youth's Capacity "Youth Let's Vote" project

As a part of its MEPI-local grant "Youth Let's Vote", MEPI grantee "Mobadarat for Development" organization held training workshops that benefited seventy young Jordanian men and women, from 12 governorates in Jordan. The project, which aims to reach out to 2000 youth from across the country, is encouraging Jordanian youth to participate in the upcoming parliamentary elections and to get involved in political life.

Participating youth were provided with the rudimentary skills to play a positive, driving and effective role in their community and with their peers urging them to participate in political life during parliamentary elections.

Participants were trained on the culture of democracy, lobbying, communication and media skills and they are learning how best to select their representatives for the sixteenth Lower House of Parliament.

In cooperation with "All for Jordan Youth Commission", "Mobadarat for Development" organization launched 12 awareness campaigns in 12

Jordanian governorates to encourage more youth to vote.

Students from Mu'tah university in Karak, Al Tafileh Technical university in Tafileh, Al Hussein university in Maan and AL Aqaba university, in southern Jordan, decided to create a mural inside the universities and encourage students to sign in as a commitment to perform their citizenship rights in election day.

Students from Jordan university in Amman, Al Ahlieh University in Balqa, Al Hashimieh University in Zarqa, chose to put ballot boxes and helium balloons in front of the offices of the Dean of Students' Affairs. Inside these boxes and balloons, they dropped statements that expressed their opinions on the MPs that they would vote for. As for the northern part of Jordan, students organized debates with potential candidates running in the northern governorates and posted the content of these debates on Facebook, Twitter and You Tube.

It is noteworthy that the launch ceremony of the project was marked by the attendance of Minister of Planning and



"Youth Let's Vote" launch ceremony



International Cooperation Jafar Hassan, Minister of Political Development, Musa Ma'ayta, Minister of Information, Ali Al Ayed, civil society leaders, media, and youth participating

in the project from across the country.

"Youth Let's Vote" project received an extensive media coverage in Jordan. ■



### Middle East Partnership Initiative

The Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), located within the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, is a unique program designed to engage directly with and invest in the peoples of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). MEPI works to create vibrant partnerships with citizens to foster the development of pluralistic, participatory, and prosperous societies throughout the MENA region. MEPI partners with local, regional and international non-governmental organizations, the private sector, academic institutions, and governments.

#### MEPI Regional Office, Tunis

Housed in the U.S. Embassy in Tunis, the MEPI Regional Office Tunis administers MEPI local projects in Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and West Bank/Gaza and accounts for more than \$5 million in program funding in 2010. In addition to coordinating with U.S. Embassies throughout the region, Tunis RO provides a variety of funding opportunities (such as the MEPI Local Grants program and Civil Society Grants) as well as supporting visits, seminars and training programs to advance the formation of communities for tomorrow.

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## Spotlight on MEPI Alumni

## Youth & Digital Campaigning the way to social change

By Manal Elattir

*"It will be the young people brimming with talent and energy and hope who can claim the future that so many in previous generations never realized." President Barack Obama - July 11, 2009*

The MEPI Alumni Network - Morocco Chapter held a one-week workshop on social media and digital campaigning and launched its campaign under the title "Be Heard Now". The campaign comes as part of the MEPI local grant "MEPI Alumni Network" implemented by Amal Sale Association. "Be Heard Now" campaign introduces new

advocacy tools to construct their own campaigns; and - Fostering youth creativity and their effective participation in bringing change to their community.

Sixteen bright MEPI Alumni (ages 19-26) were selected from a pool of 60 applicants, from six different regions in Morocco. Selected participants are active members in NGOs, equipped

such cutting edge technologies as Twitter, E-blogger, flicker, and Facebook for social activism.

Within one week, the three groups applied what they have learned during the training onto their own campaigns planning and produced podcasts to further explain and support their campaign message. Mohamed G. Beshir from Egypt, a blogger who benefited himself from a

"This training made us realize that any young person can indeed make a change. Now, we know that we can effectively mobilize other youth to do more than just chat and mingle on the net; but also raise awareness about important issues that concerns us all." *Abdellah Bourti & Rachid Eddib, MEPI Alumni.*



media tools and innovative methods to organize implement and lead successful awareness campaigns tackling important social issues.

with a strong ambition to change their community positively.

Participants formed three groups and designed three

MEPI program, shared his experience with the participants and gave the necessary new media tools that proved to work in his country. As Mr. Beshir

their ambitions for positive change in their community. "You don't lack the ideas and you don't lack the confidence to believe that you can make the change; but the challenge is how you take that idea and how you take that confidence in your abilities and turn those into reality," said Deputy Assistant Secretary Tamara Wittes. She encouraged the youth to think of MEPI as an ongoing resource as they carry on the efforts to improve their community.

### The way to social change

On October 1st 2010, MEPI Alumni Network organized a conference entitled "New media and youth: the way to social change", during which, attendees debated the role of youth as agents of change in the Moroccan society and discussed the vibrant role of new media in raising awareness about important social issues. This conference was an opportunity for participating youth to exchange experiences with their peers and civil society actors. They diffused their podcasts and explained how they will implement their campaigns with the help of the partners. ■



Through a wide range of activities the project is:

- Linking the young campaigners to important networks and partners thus creating the synergy needed to implement their campaigns;
- Building capacity of young civil society actors to understand the new social media techniques and

awareness raising campaigns addressing three different topics: the fight against corruption, social entrepreneurship and women empowerment.

During the training sessions MEPI Campaigners embarked on an adventure of learning how to mobilize people to advocate for an issue, how to make a podcast and how to use

trained the youth, they could easily relate to the different examples and case studies presented, which helped in developing their own campaign action plans.

During her visit to "Be Heard Now" program, Deputy Assistant Secretary and Head of MEPI, Tamara Wittes, had a great interaction with the young trainees. MEPI Alumni voiced